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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,
MONDAY, AUGUST 9, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

FM Gul: We won't withdraw from Iraq - Milliyet
Iranian diplomat abducted in Iraq - Sabah
Al-Jazeera's Baghdad office closed - Aksam
Arrest warrant issued for Ahmad Chalabi - Hurriyet
Bin-Laden, Zarkawi work independently of each other - Sabah
Bartholomeos complains of restricted religious freedom -
Milliyet
Bartholomeos calls for EU pressure for Halki Seminary -
Aksam
Diyarbakir mayor calls on terrorist's family - Vatan
Greek Cypriots 'heat up' Cyprus - Hurriyet 8/8
Greek Cypriots' Varosha rally peaceful - Milliyet 8/8

OPINION MAKERS

'Hostage diplomat' crisis between Iraq, Iran - Zaman
Iraq, Iran spy crisis - Yeni Safak
CIA expert: Iraq's occupation a gift for Al-Qaeda -
Cumhuriyet
Iraqi government offers amnesty to insurgents - Zaman 8/8
Rumsfeld may testify on Abu Ghraib abuse - Yeni Safak
Allawi silences Al-Jazeera - Radikal 8/8
Bartholomeos urges EU to press Turkey - Radikal
US intelligence: Tehran close to producing nuclear weapons -
Cumhuriyet
US investors favor Bush - Cumhuriyet
UN, Sudan agree - Cumhuriyet 8/8
Sudan government, Darfur insurgents to hold peace talks -
Cumhuriyet
New government crisis in Palestine - Cumhuriyet 8/8

BRIEFING

More Turks abducted in Iraq: The MFA said on Friday that three Turks were still being held hostage in Iraq. The MFA said that militants had killed another Turkish truck driver, whose body had later been identified in a hospital in Mosul. The identity of the third Turk to be killed was not immediately clear. A major Turkish transportation group, the International Transporters' Association (UNDT) has halted delivery of goods to US forces in Iraq in the face of growing violence against Turks in the region. The number of trucks crossing the Turkish-Iraq border has declined in the wake of the killings. FM Abdullah Gul said on Sunday that the Turkish government would take joint security measures with the Turkish companies operating in Iraq in the face of the recent abductions. 'Terrorist groups will not succeed in making Turkey pull out of Iraq,' Gul stressed.

PKK intensifies violence in southeast Turkey: Having been free movement in northern Iraq by US forces, the PKK/Kongra-Gel has been forced to shift its terrorist activities to southeast Turkey since June 1, "Cumhuriyet" reports. Some 3,000 PKK militants have infiltrated Turkey and organized 50 attacks against security forces over the last two months in an effort to keep the morale of militants high, the paper says. The paper writes that at least half of the alleged attacks have taken place in Tunceli province. "Cumhuriyet" claims that top PKK leaders who have defected the organization -- Osman Ocalan, Nizamettin Tas, Halil Atac, Ekrem Hidir Sarikaya and Kani Yilmaz -- are being kept under US 'control' in Mosul. The PKK has been made uneasy by recent mass demonstrations denouncing terrorism in southeast Turkish cities and towns, "Cumhuriyet" speculates. Meanwhile, Monday's "Hurriyet" claims that the PKK's former spokesman for Europe, Kani Yilmaz, announced his resignation from the organization. In a letter posted on the Kurdish 'Rizgari' webpage, Yilmaz said the rhetoric used by the PKK in dealing with the press has isolated the organization and weakened its support among Kurds. 'We have become an organization criticizing and insulting everyone, and thus are left without friends,' Yilmaz said.

Diyarbakir's Kurdish mayor criticized for visiting terrorist's family: Osman Baydemir, mayor of Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeastern city of Diyarbakir, faced heavy criticism in today's press for paying a visit of condolence to the family of a PKK member killed in recent fighting with police in Diyarbakir province. Baydemir was accompanied by four district mayors. Papers slam Baydemir for not attending the funeral of a policeman killed in the same clash in late July. The 'scandalous' visit amounted to an expression of support for terrorism, papers claim.

Ecumenical Patriarch complains of 'limited' religious freedom in Turkey: Istanbul-based Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos said Turkey still fails to fully guarantee religious freedoms, but he expressed optimism that the Greek Orthodox Halki Seminary would soon reopen. Bartholomeos told Reuters that his Church faces legal and administrative obstacles that contravene Turkey's pledges on religious freedom. 'We do not have the right to administer our own churches, monasteries, cemeteries, or schools,' the Patriarch said. 'As a result, many of them come under the administration of the state, and the state exploits them for financial gain.' 'The concept of religious freedom is very limited and shallow in Turkey,' he added. Bartholomeos said he believed that EU pressure would help secure the reopening of Halki theological seminary in Istanbul. The reasons used in the past to justify the closing of the school were not right and not in accordance with the European perception of religious freedom,' Bartholomeos noted. 'We lack the financial and administrative independence that are considered an indication of religious freedom in European countries,' Bartholomeos said. The Patriarch nevertheless voiced support for Turkey's drive to join the EU.

Greek Cypriots rally for 'reunification and peace': Hundreds of Greek Cypriots organized a march in Cyprus over the weekend, claiming their cause to be 'reunification and peace' on the island. About 1,000 Greek Cypriots marched to the Derinya border crossing carrying placards expressing their desire to return to their homes and to re-enter the town of Varosha (Maras). Commentators claim that the Greeks aim to influence a UN report to be discussed at the UNSC that envisages a reduction in the UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus. 'TRNC PM' Mehmet Ali Talat said the Turkish side had been officially notified that the demonstration would an effort for peace, and that some Greek politicians would also participate in the event.

GOT to assign a civilian to chair NSC: The ruling AK Party government is working to pick a name among three diplomats to chair the military-controlled National Security Council (NSC), Saturday's "Milliyet" reported. The three candidates for the post are Turkey's UN representative Umit Pamir, special Iraq envoy Osman Koruturk, and Turkey's ambassador to Athens Yigit Alpogon. The MFA's preference would be Pamir, while the military backs Alpogon, the paper claims.

EDITORIAL OPINION

"Mistaken US Policies in Iraq"
Yilmaz Oztuna commented in the conservative "Turkiye" (8/9): "Blood is running like water in Najaf. Najaf has always been a holy place for both Sunni and Shiite Muslims. Unfortunately, this holy place has recently come under heavy US bombing. Perhaps the US is unaware of the unhappiness this has caused among Muslims from different sects. The US willingness to expose itself to such hatred from the masses is amazing. For centuries, Muslims believed that if they took refuge in Najaf, no one could touch them. Washington never considered how Iraqis, who were brought up with this belief, would view the Americans if they engaged in combat there. If you begin military operations on other continents and try to fight terrorism globally based on such ignorance, today's results are inevitable. The US has not done anything about eliminating the PKK, and its strategic ally Turkey was offended by the US attitude. Now they are harming our drivers. It is so obvious that Turkey is being given the message to keep away from Iraq. Since this is not possible, it is clear that the crisis will spread."

"Bush, Kerry, and the Vote of Worry"
Yasemin Congar wrote from Washington in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (8/9): "Prior to the election, we can say that if the American voters believe that another terrorist attack is likely in the US, then Bush's chances to be re-elected will increase. The September 11 attacks have been intensively discussed in the US over the past several months. There have been allegations that last week's terror alert in New York and Washington are just election propaganda being used by the Bush Administration. There are claims that the Bush administration hopes to get votes by scaring the American public. During their convention in Boston, the Democrats stressed that in order to win the election, Kerry must convince the American people of his commitment to fight against terrorism. Before the

convention, many polls were showing the race between Bush and Kerry as a toss-up. However, the latest poll results are different. According to a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll, 54 percent of Americans consider Bush more capable than Kerry of countering terrorism. But the same poll shows Bush is ahead of Kerry only on this issue. For example, on the economy, Kerry is more trusted by 54 percent of Americans. A Washington Post/ABC News poll even shows that Bush's advantage on the terrorism issue has decreased. In any event, it has become clear that, one way or another, the terrorism issue will dominate the November 2 election."

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